BACKGROUNDER 5-5797 5/6/78
FRED BROWN/NEW DELHI

AFGHAN COUP, AS TOLD BY KABUL

ANNCR: AFGHANISTAN'S NEW RULERS HAVE DENIED THAT THE REVOLUTION THAT BROUGHT THEM TO POWER WAS COMMUNIST OR WAS INSPIRED BY AN OUTSIDE POWER. WITH CENSORSHIP IN FORCE IN THAT COUNTRY, CORRESPONDENT FRED BROWN FLEW BACK TO NEW DELHI FROM AFGHANISTAN TO FILE THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:

VOICE: A DARI LANGUAGE BROADCAST BY KABUL RADIO BITTERLY ACCUSED WHAT IT CALLED "AGITATIVE PROPAGANDISTS FOR INTERNATIONAL REACTION" OF SPREADING FALSEHOODS ABOUT THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THE BROADCAST SAID THE COUNTRY'S NEW RULERS ARE N O T COMMUNIST BUT RATHER DEMOCRATIC NATIONALISTS AND IT INSISTED THAT AFGHANISTAN IS N O T A SATELLITE OF ANY COUNTRY, BUT IS PURSUING ITS OWN INDEPENDENT POLICY OF WHAT IT CALLED ACTIVE POSITIVE NEUTRALITY. THE BROADCAST DENIED REPORTS THAT THOUSANDS OF AFGHANS DIED IN LAST WEEK'S UPRISING. IT INSISTED THAT NO MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE LOST THEIR LIVES. THE RADIO EVEN DENIED THAT WHAT TOOK PLACE WAS A COUP D'ETAT. IT CONTENDED THAT WHAT OCCURRED WAS IN THE WORDS OF THE BROADCAST, "AN ORIGINAL GENERAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION."

WHILE N O T ACCEPTING SUCH DENIALS AT FACE VALUE, SOME OBSERVERS IN KABUL BELIEVE IT MAY BE A MISTAKE TO LABEL THE NEW REGIME HASTILY. THE RADIO KABUL BROADCAST MADE MUCH OF THE FACT THAT AFGHANISTAN HAS TWO GROUPINGS OF POLITICAL PARTIES THAT CALLED THEMSELVES COMMUNIST. THE TWO GROUPS ARE THE PARCHAM, MEANING FLAG, AND KHALC, MEANING MASSES.

DESPITE SOME FEUDING IN THE PAST, THE TWO GROUPS MERGED IN 1977. ALMOST ALL MEMBERS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT ARE MEMBERS OF ONE OR OTHER OF THE TWO WINGS. THE NEW PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER, NOOR MOHAMMED TARAKI WAS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE

UNIFIED PARTY. MISTER TARAKI, AT ONE TIME, WAS AFGHANISTAN'S PRESS ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON AND LATER WORKED IN THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN KABUL. THE KABUL RADIO BROADCAST ALSO COMPLAINED AGAINST WHAT IT SAID WERE ATTEMPTS TO PORTRAY THE NEW REGIME AS ANTI-RELIGIOUS AND SUGGESTIONS THAT IT MIGHT UPSET NATIONAL OR CULTURAL TRADITIONS. THE NEW GOVERNMENT SEEMS WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE OPPOSITION FROM MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN THIS NINETY-NINE PERCENT MUSLIM NATION. IN DEFERENCE TO MUSLIM FELLINGS, ALL PROCLAMATIONS ISSUED BY THE NEW REGIME BEGIN WITH SUCH PHRASES AS "IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT ALLAH."

(OPT) KABUL RADIO HAS GONE ALL OUT SINCE THE COUP TO TALK ABOUT THE ALLEGED CRIMES OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME OF PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD, WHO IS DEPICTED AS A CORRUPT DESPOT WHO SOLD THE COUNTRY OUT TO COLONIALIST INTERESTS. PRESIDENT DAOUD, ALONG WITH MANY MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY, WAS KILLED DURING THE REBELLION ON THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. THE LEADERS OF THE NEW REGIME SAID THEY HAD REFUSED TO SURRENDER. THE BADLY DAMAGED PALACE HAS BECOME A TOP SPECTATOR ATTRACTION SINCE THE COUP. BUT WHETHER THE CROWDS POURING INTO THE PALACE GROUNDS GO TO APPLAUD THE ACTIONS OF THE NEW REGIME OR SIMPLY OUT OF CURIOSITY IS NOT CLEAR. ONE YOUNG MAN THIS REPORTER SPOKE WITH SAID HE HAD NEVER DREAMED HE WOULD GET TO SEE THE INSIDE OF THE PALACE. AND AN ASIAN FOREIGN RESIDENT TOLD THIS CORRESPONDENT THAT AFTER VISITING THE PALACE, HIS AFGHAN SERVANT HAD COME HOME AND WEPT OVER THE BLOODSHED, ESPECIALLY THE DEATH OF THE WOMEN AND YOUNG CHILDREN. AT LAST REPORTS THE BODIES WERE STILL BEING HELD IN REFRIGERATION WHILE AUTHORITIES DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THEM. UNDER MUSLIM LAW, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN BURIED BEFORE SUNDOWN THE NEXT DAY. (END OPT)

-0-